

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 /032 W

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R 201732Z JUN 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9109

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 800

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA 99

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, XT, EEC

SUBJECT: ETUC LEADERSHIP SHAKE-UP DEVELOPING

1. SUMMARY: MAJOR CHANGES IN THE SECRETARIAT OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC) PEGGED TO THE VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION OF ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY RASSCHAERT ARE BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED. ACCORDING TO INFORMED MISSION SOURCES, RASSCHAERT MAY RESIGN LATER THIS YEAR TO ACCEPT A POSITION WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. (END SUMMARY).

2. MISSION SOURCES AT THE EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (ETUC) HAVE CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY THEO RASSCHAERT WILL RESIGN BY THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE SAME SOURCES INDICATE THAT
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THE CONTROLVERSIAL AND MUCH-CRITICIZED RASSCHAERT WILL

BE GIVEN A TOP POST IN ONE OF THE NEWLY CREATED INSTITUTES OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, EITHER THE EC VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER IN BERLIN OR THE EC CENTER FOR IMPROVEMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS IN DUBLIN. AT A JUNE 17 DINNER GIVEN BY THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO THE EC IN HONOR OF ETUC PRESIDENT VETTER, RASSCHAERT TOLD THE EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING THE ETUC BUT HE DID NOT DISCUSS DETAILS.

3. JEAN KULAKOWSKI, FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE NOW DEFUNCT EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR WHO IS PRESENTLY SERVING AS ONE OF THREE ETUC SECRETARIES, IS CONSIDERED A LIKELY REPLACEMENT FOR RASSCHAERT. KULAKOWSKI IS WIDELY RESPECTED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CIRCLES, BUT THE FACT THAT HE REPRESENTS THE MINORITY CHRISTIAN TRADE UNION SECTOR OF THE ETUC IS VIEWED AS AN OBSTACLE TO HIS ELEVATION TO THE TOP POST. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WILL PROBABLY BE A CONCENTRATED EFFORT TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GERMAN DGB AND THE BRITISH TUC ON THIS ISSUE AND KULAKOWSKI COULD BE AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE.

4. DURING A RECENT CONVERSATION, BELGIAN FGTB LEADER GEORGES DEBUNNE TOLD THE MISSION AND EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHES THAT KULAKOWSKI HAS EXCELLENT CREDENTIALS AND COULD EVENTUALLY BECOME SECRETARY GENERAL IF THE GERMAN DGB WOULD AGREE TO OVERLOOK HIS CHRISTIAN UNION ANTECEDENTS. DEBUNNE HAS BEEN AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF RASSCHAERT, A FELLOW SOCIALIST AND FORMER FGTB STAFFER WHO WAS A PROTEGE OF DEBUNNE'S PREDECESSOR, LUIS MAJOR.

5. COMMENT: MISSION SOURCES AT THE EC COMMISSION WILL NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY REPORTS THAT RASSCHAERT IS BEING CONSIDERED TO A POSITION WITH ONE OF THE EC CENTERS. HOWEVER, HIS APPOINTMENT WOULD BE A TWO-FOLD PLUS FOR THE COMMISSION. WHILE RASSCHAERT IS HIGHLY REGARDED FOR HIS TECHNICAL ABILITIES, HE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NOT MEASURED UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE ETUC BRASS IN A POLITICAL SENSE. BY ACCEPTING HIM, THE COMMISSION WOULD BE CREATING GOOD WILL WITH THE TRADE UNIONS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY GAINING THE SERVICES OF AN INTELLIGENT AND COMPETENT TECHNICIAN. GREENWALD

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